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Bennington agrees to pay \$2.1 million in superfund case

BENNINGTON, Vt. (AP) — The town of Bennington has agreed to settle Superfund claims at its former landfill at a cost of roughly \$2.1 million.

A consent decree filed in U.S. District Court brings to a close about six years of talks between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the town and about two dozen businesses over who is responsible for cleaning up toxic wastes and monitoring the dump.

"It's been a very long haul," Town Manager Stuart Hurd said Monday.

The town has already spent about \$1 million in legal and engineering fees towards its \$2.1 million share, Hurd said.

A group of manufacturers — among them Johnson Controls, Bijur Lubricating Corp., Eveready Battery Co., and Textron, which is affiliated with the former Benmont Paper Co. — are held responsible for what appears to be another \$10 million to place a permanent cap on the landfill.

EPA spokeswoman Sarah White declined to comment, saying the agency intended to formally announce the settlement Tuesday.

"I think we're pretty happy where we ended up. I think it's reasonable," said Hurd. "The town did a good deal for itself."

As part of the consent decree — which must still be accepted by the court — the town has agreed to install

a leachate collection and treatment system at the landfill. The town is considering linking the system to the municipal sewer line and wastewater treatment plant, Hurd said.

The agreement with the EPA also calls for the town to reclaim wetlands off Burgess Road. Hurd said the town had hoped to enhance the wetlands at the headwaters of Jewett Brook, adjacent to the landfill. Environmental officials, however, feared the wetlands would be at risk if there were problems at the dump, he said.



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